

Fantastic Mr Fox

The three farmers are angry with Mr Fox because he steals from them to feed his family. They decide to hide outside his fox hole and shoot him when he comes out.

"Don't get careless," said Mrs Fox. "You know they'll be waiting for you, all three of them."

"Don't worry about me," said Mr Fox. "I'll see you later."

But Mr Fox would not have been quite so cocky had he known exactly where the three farmers were waiting at that moment. They were just outside the entrance to the hole, each one crouching behind a tree with his gun loaded. And what is more, they had chosen their positions very carefully, making sure that the wind was not blowing from them towards the fox's hole. In fact, it was blowing in the opposite direction. There was no chance of them being 'smelled out'.

Mr Fox crept up the dark tunnel to the mouth of his hole. He poked his long handsome face out into the night air and sniffed once.

He moved an inch or two forward and stopped. He sniffed again. He was always especially careful when coming out of his hole.

He inched forward a little more. The front half of his body was now in the open.

His black nose twitched from side to side, sniffing and sniffing for the scent of danger. He found none, and he was just about to go trotting forward into the wood when he heard, or thought he heard a tiny noise, a soft rustling sound, as though someone had moved a foot ever so gently through a patch of dry leaves.

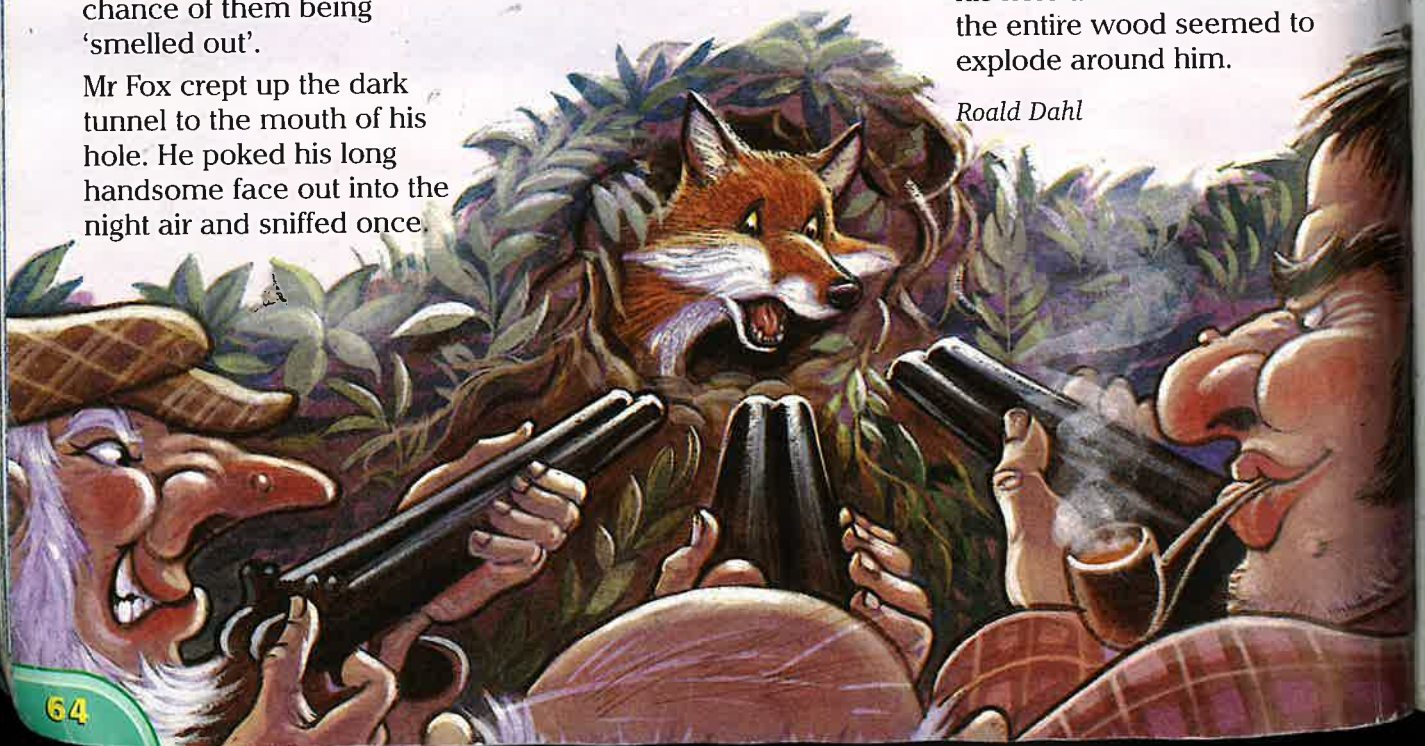
Mr Fox flattened his body against the ground and lay very still, his ears pricked. He waited a long time, but he heard nothing more.

"It must have been a field-mouse," he told himself, "or some other small animal."

He crept a little further out of the hole...then further still. He was almost right out in the open now. He took a last careful look around. The wood was murky and very still. Somewhere in the sky the moon was shining.

Just then, his sharp night-eyes caught a glint of something bright behind a tree not far away. It was a small silver speck of moonlight shining on a polished surface. Mr Fox lay still, watching it. What on earth was it? Now it was moving. It was coming up and up.... Great heavens! It was the barrel of a gun! Quick as a whip, Mr Fox jumped back in his hole and at the same time the entire wood seemed to explode around him.

Roald Dahl



TEXT

- 1 Describe how Mr Fox comes out of his hole. Make a note of each step he took, like this:
Step 1: Mr Fox poked his nose out of his hole and sniffed once.
Step 2: Then he...
- 2 Underline any words in the sentences you wrote in question 1 that give you a clue about the order or the time, e.g. first, then.
- 3 How did the farmers make sure Mr Fox would not know they were there?
- 4 What 'gave away' the farmers?
- 5 Explain what these phrases mean.
 a) smelled out b) scent of danger c) his ears pricked
- 6 Some points in the story could be true. Copy the things that could be true.
 Foxes steal rabbits. Foxes live in holes. Farmers don't like foxes. Foxes talk to each other. Foxes have a good sense of smell. Foxes know what a gun is.
- 7 Who do you feel most sorry for – the farmers or the foxes? Say why.

SENTENCE

- 1 Write down who or what each pronoun stands for in these sentences.
 Do it like this:
 "They (the farmers) will be waiting for you (Mr Fox)," she (Mrs Fox) said.
 a) "I () am going now," Mr Fox said. b) She () told Mr Fox to be careful.
 c) Mr Fox told her () not to worry. d) He () moved slowly out of the hole.
- 2 Copy these pronouns and write whether each one is singular (S) or plural (P).
 a) I (S) b) me c) he d) him e) she f) her g) it h) we
- 3 Say whether the pronoun 'you' is singular or plural in these sentences.
 a) "I want you to listen carefully," the teacher said to the children.
 b) "Can you come out?" Emma asked Tom.

WORD

- 1 Join each word in Set A to a word from Set B to make a compound word.
 Do it like this: moon + light = moonlight
Set A wind snow hand air run butter black foot wheel play
Set B ground bag way mill chair man port ball cup bird
- 2 Use the *Look, say, cover, write, check* method to help you learn to spell the words.
- 3 Write some sentences and use the compound words from question 1 in them.